

Community Dialogue #1 Group Notes

This document contains a summary notes for all 9 groups. Please locate your group from the list below and find the corresponding page. Review the summary and send any comments or corrections to plantofarm@gmail.com by January 26th, 2007.

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Participants:

Group 1: Pat Reichert; Marcus Dowrich, Jana Roerick, Dan Jason; Colin Byron, Natasha Wille, Georgina; Zelly Taylor; Suzanne Schroder, Tim Marchant; Conrad Pilon, Ron Puhky

Group 2: Brian Swanson, Mary Laucks, Michael Weisner, Ron Weisner, Charlie Eagle, Judy Eagle, Brie Eagle, Delaine Faulkner, Deborah Miller, Ty Cameron, Susan Grace, Elizabeth Cooper, Adam Gold, Stephan Pigeon

Group 3: Lokesh Green, Don Lester, Janis Gouthier, Christine Torgrimson, Marion Pape, Maxime Leichter, Nancy van Patten, Lucille Lamarche, Susan Evan

Group 4: Eric Booth, Donn Tarris; Rollie Cook, Marguerite Lee, Scott Nyuli, Bob McGinn, Sally Dailly, Melanie Platz, Garnet Lee, Dave Walls, Lorraine Lowry, John Lammers, John Wilcox

Group 5: Tanya Lester, Kim Hunter, Caroline Hickman, Mike Garside, Peter Lamb, Steve Hunt, Melissa Roberts, Kathryn Hebdige, Sebastian Moffatt, Ray Hatch, Deanna Ziraldo

Group 6: Craig Seedhouse, Marsha Goldberg, Ben Luna, Murray Hunter, Diane Roberts, Darren & Vanessa Farias, Wendy McEachern, Elizabeth White, Leezee Porter

Group 7: Di Sutterfield, Lois Sprague, Marion Hargrove, Kathy Weisner, Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Ken Strike, Gwyn Strike, Wendi Gilson, Ramona Scott, Margaret Thomson

Group 8: George Laundry; Ted Harrison; Tony Kennedy, Mike Larmour, George Ehring, Cam Robinson, Vera Robinson, Ron Pither, Julia Grace, Mataji Ishaya, Jim Lemaistre.

Group 9: Liz Armour, Jim Scott, Jane Squier, Jim Maurice, JoAnn Tymchuk, Mark Whitear, Rob Weeden, Roger Middleton, Gay Alkoff, Marcel Kauer

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 1: Facilitator’s Name - Andrea Gillman

Group Members’ Names: Pat Reichert; Marcus Dowrich, Jana Roerick, Dan Jason; Colin Byron, Natasha Wille, Georgina; Zelly Taylor; Suzanne Schroder, Tim Marchant; Conrad Pilon, Ron Puhky

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *The regulations and costs in relation to the lack of abattoir facilities on island, the costs of using land for farming vs. developing the land for any other purpose- the capital cost difference makes it nearly impossible for farming, public policy which is actively working against farmers- with respect to seed and patenting*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *The passion of the people on SSI, 2 highly active agricultural organizations on the island, SSI as a model for sustainability*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The majority of the group agreed with this statement, using words such as ‘heartening’, ‘optimistic’, and ‘excitement’ to describe their reaction. Given the fabulous turn out at Community Dialogue #1, many feel they are headed in the right direction with this plan. There is a need to contextualize this statement with the ‘How and Why’.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land-growing hay as feed for animals on the island • Profitability of farming • The general perception of small farms, their ‘legitimacy’ is questioned • Regulations and costs in relation to lack of abattoir facilities on island • The feasibility of building such a facility on island • The availability of local meats • Agri-business farms hurting local business • Individual ‘Seed Reproduction’-restrictions and closing of the border • Labour costs vs. profit earned • Regulations pertaining to transient labour-unable to build housing for them etc. • Difficulty in hiring both skilled and unskilled labour • Lack of agricultural education in the school system • The cost of using land for farming vs. the cost of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people • The passion of the people on SSI • The ‘wholesome’ image of the farm • The farmer as a healer • Agricultural history • History of food production • Wealth of traditional knowledge as a result of farming through the generations • Tremendous number of years of farming experience and skill • Complete knowledge from the soil and beyond • Climate • Quality of soil • The populations understanding of and gravitation towards organic foods • The market for natural organic foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging to hear of this goal and process • An ambitious goal, heartening, need to keep this goal alive • An extremely important goal, strongly believe in it • Well stated goal • Given the incredible turnout today, strong indication we will move in this direction • Hopeful and optimistic about this • Much money is going to infrastructure projects libraries etc. what about a portion of this money going into a local food store etc. Where are our priorities? • This is a great start given the positive response today and the numbers here • Very excited to learn about this, and the chance to move from a hobby to a full business one

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<p>developing the land for any other use—the capital cost differences between these 2 uses make it nearly impossible for farming land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working full time to finance labour costs makes expansion difficult • From a business perspective the cost effectiveness of using local goods/ingredients • The need to pay more for our food-quality verses quantity • Low costs set by imported foods • Competitiveness of local farms to get in to retail market • The subsidy (in the form of infrastructure and support) for industry rather than local business • Lack of consumer understanding around the true costs of local vs. imported • Availability of local supply • The absence of models or examples for community agriculture • The restrictive regulations for community agriculture • Can't use park land for community agriculture • Lack of government understanding of security in local farms and lack of security in international food sources • Lack of national food policy • Increase in numbers wanting to live on SSI, but not wanting to deal with farms as neighbours • Lack of government and public awareness and support for sustainable agriculture • Public policy which is actively working against farmers with respect to seed and patenting • Cost of energy ex. Fuel • Invasive plants and weeds and their disposal • Incorporation of agro-tourism into local business • Introduction of disease and invasive species from off island • Increasing ferry costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unmet market for organics • Local food retailers receptive to local foods and local meats ex. GVM, Thrifty's, Nature Works • The profile of Salt Spring Island off island, known for products such as Salt Spring Island Roasting • Tourists • Island nature forces us to look in to local options (sooner than in other geographic locations) • Salt Spring Island as a model for sustainability • Geographic locale-accessibility for tourism • Existence of and expertise in seed sanctuary • 2 highly active agricultural organizations on the island • Saturday and Tuesday Farmers Markets • Fall Fair • Ruckle Park 	<p>which will help feed the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase focus on involving young people in the agriculture scene • Excitement in seeing this process, need to bring together those leasing land and those with the farming expertise • Farming is a very respectable skill • A well stated goal, needs to set the context with the how and why, there is more to it that just farming
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GROUP 2: Facilitator’s Name - Bev Suderman

Group Members’ Names: Brian Swanson, Mary Laucks, Michael Weisner, Ron Weisner, Charlie Eagle, Judy Eagle, Brie Eagle, Delaine Faulkner, Deborah Miller, Ty Cameron, Susan Grace, Elizabeth Cooper, Adam Gold, Stephan Pigeon

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** Disincentives to farm - (NOTE: members of this group committed to providing more specific information on this item in the feedback process by responding to these notes) roadblocks, government restrictions i.e. animal processing, taxation and related costs, input costs, land costs; Lack of processing and storage infrastructure; Labour shortages, i.e. shortage of skilled labour.
2. **Top 3 Assets:** Salt Spring Island community: Educated market for product, willing/able to pay, restaurants and stores support, cohesive farm community, Farmers Institute and other organizations; Biophysical advantages: climate/microclimates, cleared land, herbicide/pesticide free land; Culture/Heritage of agriculture: history, heritage seeds, heritage trees.
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** This group generally agreed (with provisions) with the goal of this process because they are committed to the production of local quality food, their concern to protect what currently exists (the assets they have to work with), and their concern for food security.

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil amendment availability on the island: manure, compost, general nutrients – not enough available locally, although some is being wasted through current practices, like burning plant materials • On non-ALR lands: OCP restrictions, tax issues, developing a farm plan that makes economic sense • Disincentives to farm, which is a labour of love – the biggest challenge is to remove roadblocks, i.e. government restrictions re animal processing for example, or tax structures that increase operating costs • Space restrictions – we live on an island • Labour shortage/shortage of skilled labour • Access to product (for the consumer) and access to market (for the producer) – there are barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of backgrounds / ideas • Knowledgeable market in the community that is willing/able to pay more, and is not yet saturated with SSI products – this market includes tourists • Biophysical: climate, cleared land, water availability (some parts of the island), herbicide & pesticide-free land! • Farms & orchards established long-term (heritage) • Strong supports from restaurants, grocery & health stores • Captive market of consumers • Close proximity to larger markets (Vancouver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After discussion of the group’s reservations about the stated goal, a quick show of hands indicated 13 in favour & 0 opposed to the goal. • Concerns included: • The need to qualify the statement to balance impacts on the natural environment (wildlife, forests) of agricultural activity. Need to find a “sustainable agriculture balance” to protect the ecology of the region. Does re-establish agriculture mean increase its land base to the detriment of other values? • A related concern is that the OCP, tax assessment procedures, and other

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product is going to waste (apples / nuts) • Land is going to waste, i.e. not being used, due to labour shortages, etc. • Cost of producing food makes it hard to compete – locally grown food costs more than imports • Lack of processing and storage infrastructure Required support from consumers • Availability & costs for farm inputs, like animal feed, tools, materials, and supplies (including manure and other soil amendments) – transportation doubles costs – lots of things are not produced on Salt Spring Island • Rural/urban values clash re noise (some people have vacation expectations about living in a rural area) or lot sizes (long narrow strip lots with very close proximity to neighbours aggravates impacts) • Zoning-related challenges • Undervalued state of food impacts – low wages in the agricultural sector; food deserves higher value • Water shortages are a constraint on farming – in metred systems, the cost of water increases farming costs • Potential for agricultural activity to pollute – we need to discuss the kind of agriculture we desire to have on the Island “Just say NO to industrial activity”, i.e. high concentrations of animals in small feed lots, etc. • Cost of land prohibitive barrier to entry into farming – also makes the land attractive to subdivide – leads to loss of prime farm land • Lack of subsidies (federal and provincial) to allow successful competition with US product, which is highly subsidized • Looking ahead in medium to long term, i.e. trends in energy costs; climate change – how can we be ready to face these changes? • Secure prime agricultural land for agricultural use – NOTE: This one is a recommendation • Assaults on ALR zoning and all agricultural lands • Maintaining diversity in agriculture, i.e. protecting seeds / stock diversity; diversity in ways of growing food, i.e. permaculture vs obtrusive, monoculture • Low support for mid-week market from local government • Manure availability 	<p>Island, Vancouver)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive farm community: cooperative, supportive, willing to work together • We’re here and thinking ahead • Involved community • Core foundation to meet future challenges • Supply of heritage nuts, apple trees, together with seed conservation initiatives • Community appreciation of pesticide-free food (organic, certified organic, etc.) • Labour – really fine people are working to support agriculture (just not enough of them) • Proximity – community connection • Diversity of microclimates – can raise lots of different things; can grow things all year round (2 dots) • Farmers Institute • Salt Spring currency 	<p>regulations/policies create disincentives to protect natural areas because all land is taxed as rural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to include agricultural product marketing, not just production, in the goal
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GROUP 3: Facilitator’s Name - Erica Crawford Boettcher

Group Members’ Names: Lokesh Green, Don Lester, Janis Gouthier, Christine Torgrimson, Marion Pape, Maxime Leichter, Nancy van Patten, Lucille Lamarche, Susan Evans

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Price of land, Availability of skilled labour, Lack of an organization working for farmland protection*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *year-round growing season/ climate, easily informed/receptive public, commitment to organic practices, SSI brand*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The group was generally in agreement with the statement, subject to some revision. Our group felt the goal should be aimed at the local, encompassing sustainability and environmental priorities as well. There was concern that agriculture might be defined too narrowly, focusing the goal on commodity agriculture. There was general agreement that the term “re-establish” was inappropriate, and could be replaced by “re-invigorate,” for example. There was also a desire for more specific and measurable goals. For example, the goal could be stated in such terms as: “that x% of local food needs are provided for locally.”*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water shortage/supply • Diminishing healthy groundwater • Pollution of lakes • Price of land to purchase (transition to farming, and further acquisition) • High cost of living • Availability of skilled labour (linked to high cost of living) • Access to locally grown food • Access to information on local resources and products • Access for young people (to take up farming) • Tenure • Land use policy • current focus on niche goods over staples (lack of support for growing staple foods on-island) • limited land base, and hence potential production (can the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate, year-round growing season • Rural residential acreages, and their contribution to food production • Mixes of natural growth and agricultural uses • Easily informed and receptive public; educated, early adapters • Political will • Huge interest: diversity of active groups • Innovators/talent/creativity of local people • Cooperation • Commitment to organic practices • Captive population • Expertise in sustainability • SSI “brand,” visibility, international recognition • Regionalism (CRD, SGI, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven people agreed, one disagreed and one said that the statement was not disagreeable • All agreements were subject to revisions/provisions, as listed below. • “Agriculture” should be replaced with “sustainable local food supply” • This is too focused on commodity agriculture • Should focus on local needs, capitalize on the local context • “Re-establish” should be something like “re-invigorate” (agriculture is still alive and well) • Climate change underscores the need for

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<p>population of SSI have a self-sustaining food supply?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low intensity use of arable land • this is encouraged by current tax structure • alternative uses of arable land • climate change • economic change/upheaval (global) • year-round farming is not valued locally • local produce is not valued locally • lack of education on value of local production • insufficient infrastructure (small size of individual and community operations) • lack of equipment and technology • regulations that encourage certain activities to leave the island (eg: slaughter, eggs, poultry) • conflicts and a lack of incentives between multiple uses of property (eg: conservation and agricultural uses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - due to policies and regulations • lack of local understanding of how agriculture links to energy/environmental/global issues • lack of understanding of implications of local purchasing (paying more for local food has other benefits) • cost of inputs compared with revenues • regulations • cost of hay and other off-island inputs • lack of networking, capacity building and planning for agriculture on SSI • lack of action, coordination, leadership, prioritization • lack of zoning for farmland protection • suitability of local diets to the local environment/conditions (eg: what is SSI good at producing, vs. what do people choose to eat) • land isn't being put to best use, for greatest or most suitable production (what are the soils/climate of SSI best at producing? How to capitalize on local assets) • Lack of an organization to work for farmland protection • ALR should be expanded • (low) priority on agricultural use (regulations/policy) • Settlement patterns • density, ideas of conservation and sustainability • transportation, distance to markets • lack of housing for farmworkers • incentive to sell farms rather than transfer to the next generation (loss of farmland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses and associated infrastructure • Access to resources (human, networking, infrastructure, expertise) • Wealth and capital • Media is supportive and available • Presence of processing, packaging, value-added products • Huge market (proximity to large populations/markets in southern BC) • Everything we grow sells • Technological knowledge, potential of the internet • SSI energy strategy website/blog (see Marion Pape) • Retired people (pool of knowledge, time, volunteers, resources) • Seed sanctuary • Healthy soil • Organic soil • Community infrastructure (halls, buildings, etc) • Teaching capacity • Heritage crops • Apples, plums, pears, potatoes (crops that grow well here) • Sale at local grocery stores • Supportive environmental/sustainability focused businesses. eg: Soyanova; Natureworks (fair prices, distribution) • Local organizations: I-SEA (coordinating efforts, supports community initiatives); Farmers Institute, Island Natural Growers; etc • Wild food forage • Water catchment potential (in winter especially) • Healthy groundwater • Home gardens (production for personal consumption). Note: this is not in the official inventories. • Environmentally conscious community • Tourism • Awareness of climate change • Innovative farm practices 	<p>this to be a priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed, provided that there is not an encroachment on waterways or forests, and that this is in harmony with the OCP • Agreed, however this is not a suitable goal statement. It should be measurable (eg: to provide for X% of local food needs) • Need a more specific goal • Should be a focus on local food needs and growing assets • A priority should be placed on being sustainable, local and protecting the environment • Desirable goal, but need to clarify the vision/goals. Where does this fit into the bigger picture on SSI? • Terms are vague—need to be clarified • What time scale are we talking about?
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Group 4: Facilitator’s Name - Ian Scott

Group Members’ Names: Eric Booth, Donn Tarris; Rollie Cook, Marguerite Lee, Scott Nyuli, Bob McGinn, Sally Dailly, Melanie Platz, Garnet Lee, Dave Walls, Lorraine Lowry, John Lammers, John Wilcox

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Price of land and availability of water, regulations that limit construction of buildings to attract labourers (tied to definition of farm family that is not multigenerational), input costs higher on Salt Spring than elsewhere.*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *Good climate, high degree of social/environmental awareness amongst Salt Spring residents, farmland trust initiative has begun.*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *Generally this group agreed with the statement. Some went so far as to describe it has an imperative. The term “agriculture” was seen as too narrow for some, with suggestions for other elements - “community agriculture”, “food security” or “ agroforestry” that need to be infused into the goal. Some felt the goal was maybe unrealistic as the economics of agriculture just don’t work on Salt Spring - which leads to the conclusion that the economic component of the goal should be maybe held as a higher priority.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land price • Availability of water (and price) • Debt based monetary system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Farmers can’t get small loans from institutions ◦ Huge interest costs for purchase of land • Limited opportunity to buy local products • Identifying local in shops can be difficult • Unwillingness of people to pay more for local food • People don’t recognize true cost of local food • Can’t find good, trained labour • Input costs are very high – higher than elsewhere (feed, machinery, ferry, fuel) • Need more farmers – young people not interested, farming is not an easy life • People’s lack of understanding of issues associated with local and organic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Islands Trust – local body we can work with • Good climate • Doubling population in summer – easy to sell products • Strong willed, independent residents • A lot of knowledge • Long-time farming history • High degree of social/environmental awareness • Strong sense of community – being an islander • Cachet to “Salt Spring” brand • Strong presence of farmer institutions • Farming community cooperative • Ability to model things – as an island (petri dish) • Farmland trust initiative as begun on Salt Spring • Strong local currency initiative • Local retail outlets will take SSI produce • Restaurants take local produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – as a package • Imperative for the supply of food • Makes me nervous – economics are difficult and people can get stuck. Economics are a bigger priority than the other components. • Yes – if everyone gets involved • It is doable • Good change of success – shame not to. • Yes • Should be broader than simply “agriculture” • Better term would be “actively promote” than “re-establish” • Unrealistic because of economics of farming • Should not just be “agriculture”, but maybe “community agriculture”, should also include food security and agroforestry • Off-farm income needed to make agriculture work

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability of housing for farm labor (seasonal and year round) • Affordability of housing for new farmers • Competition for farmland with non-farmers • Regulations impacting farmers - particularly on the ALR • Need to go off island to slaughter animals – high dollar and time costs, energy • Regulations that stipulates need to have separate food safe building • No support from government to help farmers meet new regulations • Practical challenges of compiling with rules • Government acting without a vision • People used to getting all types of food all the time • Government not supportive of small farmers – focused instead on corporate farmers. • Local government demeans small scale farmers with their policies. • Ignorance for the need to tackle these issues holistically • Demise of the family farm • New farmers do not have access to enough capital • Farmers can't pay the higher wages that are demanded by labourers on Salt Spring • Regulations limiting construction of buildings that are necessary to attract labour (regulations definition of farm family, which does not recognize a multigenerational definition, is part of the problem here) • Farmers no recourse to complain about regs – question of who Farm Practices Act serves • Islands Trust has not developed farm buildings regulations adequately • Growing food is a lot of work – there is a lack of education for new farmers • Need greater participation from farmers at local “farmers market” • Trailers not a solution to farm housing – farm labourers deserve a high quality of life which means need to build more permanent structures • Salt Spring becoming Whistler • Too much restricting growth by IT rather than 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have two farmer's markets • Developing agri-tourism, people interested in experiencing food and agriculture • Detailed information base (e.g. LUI and other) • Some farms making money • New agriculture markets provide new opportunities – changing demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a critical density for it to work • Where are there examples of agriculture successfully being a “social, cultural and economic priority.” • We all have to eat, why import? • Agriculture is a lot of work. • Need a certain population, critical mass for it to be feasible.
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<p>planning for growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulations don't promote farming• Lack of people getting up, speaking out and participating in local political and advocacy process• Farmers are aging• Young people not adequately being educated in farming• No good mechanism exists for rewarding current farmers financially for their land (ALR)• How to sell land as a "farm" – not gentrified• Moving to estates not farms.		
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GROUP 5: Facilitator’s Name - Kaitlin Kazmierowski

Group Members’ Names: Tanya Lester, Kim Hunter, Caroline Hickman, Mike Garside, Peter Lamb, Steve Hunt, Melissa Roberts, Kathryn Hebdige, Sebastian Moffatt, Ray Hatch, Deanna Ziraldo

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Decreasing affordability of farming lifestyle, Increasing real estate prices, Lack of government support*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *Local retail outlets that promote local products, People/ community itself (the growing community, active citizens), Climate (extended growing season)*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The group generally agreed with this goal, however there was a sense that asking this type of question was somewhat redundant and a waste of time. Group members agreed with the need to focus on the social, cultural and economic prioritization of agriculture on SSI, but also felt that the goal should include a focus on the environment (including sustainable practices, land preservation and land regeneration), education and youth engagement. The group is enthusiastic and hopes that realistic targets can be set, so that the outcome of this process will be progressive, timely and more than a wish list.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water scarcity, quality, competition of usage with development. • General efficiency of production • Lack of sharing of ideas/ infrastructure/ production • Rising costs for meat producers (including lack of on-island abattoir facilities) • Producers are not getting a deserved price for local products. • Lack of matching productivity with marketing • Lack of true farming culture • Lack of recognition of the valuable functions of local agriculture (in terms of social/ community ties, the environment, sustainable practices, habitat creation etc) and the lack of returns (financial and others) that should come from these practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People, community consciousness- including customers, and specialty customers which generate opportunities • The growing community • Local restaurants, B & B’s • SSI’s agricultural land base • BC ferries- isolation allows local people to buy local products • Islands Trust Act- the use of SSI’s exceptional status • Climate- long growing season • Heritage/ traditions through farmsteads- a strong historical base for re-creating agriculture • Diversity of foods produced, often unexpected products • Proximity to GVRD, CRD- proximity to a diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General agreement from all members, however specifics outlined below: • • Opportunity for the community and benefits for farmers • Vital because farming is the most important lifestyle; its in peoples’ blood • Excitement surrounding this process (community turn-out); potential for a huge impact • Economic priority is needed most • This question is perhaps a waste of peoples’ time; need more focus, make better use of peoples’ time • Needs structure and quick delivery • Needs a discussion paper • Needs to be progressive, substantive, a discrete

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of date definition of farming (omits diversity, mixing of uses, sustainability) • Lack of focus of small farms in terms of regulations- overarching regulations do not consider small farms. • Under-use of ALR on SSI • Lack of skilled labour and the finances to hire such labour • Lack of zoning which promotes agricultural uses; decreasing agricultural land base • Increasing real estate prices • Local produce costs more for consumers • Increasing cost of fuel • General lack of public education regarding the benefits of local food- a disconnect • Competition with subsidized produce • Imported foods dominate local market • Overall challenge of year-round production. • Demographic shift away from local farming, youth leaving the island • Decreasing affordability of farming lifestyle • Overall difficulty of farming and food production (including climatic conditions) • Lack of set goals for local farming to draw from (e.g. land preservation/ regeneration) • Forestry/ woodlot management not considered as part of agricultural income • Lack of support from Fed/ Prov government for agriculture (unlike for sustainable forestry practices). 	<p>agricultural industry, expertise and history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Plant Health facility (research farm) • Farmer's Institute and various local organizations • Past help from government for woodlot management • Great climatic conditions for woodlot growth- high value of forestry • Local retail outlets that promote local products • Markets support local products • Strong potential for co-ops • Local activists are politically aware- strong lobby support • Local expertise: skills, marketing, supporting each other 	<p>set of goals by the next session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of sessions should correspond better with agricultural schedules (concern that April is too late for report delivery) • A silly question • Focus on social ramifications • Order of community dialogues; perhaps vision should be discussed first rather than last • Goal does not address the environment; need a strong environmental focus which builds it into this vision • Need to acknowledge farming as a means of land preservation/ protection • Goal needs to include education, government lobbying and continuity of the farm • Integration of farming into curriculum (where does food come from?) • Social and cultural aspects are key, need to unify these with the environment in terms of practices and methods • Goal must be reachable, realistic, feasible; not just a wish list- this type of goal is possible • Need for challenging yet realistic/ feasible targets • Increase involvement of land and people: education and hands-on learning is vital • Keeping youth on the island
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 6: Facilitator’s Name - Kristi Tatebe

Group Members’ Names: Craig Seedhouse, Marsha Goldberg, Ben Luna, Murray Hunter, Diane Roberts, Darren & Vanessa Farias, Wendy McEachern, Elizabeth White, Leezee Porter

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** Economic challenges (viability for producers as well as consumer willingness to pay), Regulatory challenges, Marketing of local product
2. **Top 3 Assets:** Social assets (local expertise, reputation), Economic assets: Saturday market, Natureworks
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** Generally agreed but reservations with “re-establish”

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic -Local producers cannot be competitive with commercial off-island producers due to high cost of labour, & subsidies of off-island food by government -Lack of economic incentives to farm • Marketing - Marketing of local food difficult as producers don’t have time to market - Lack of coordination among growers for marketing - Poor location of Tuesday market - Lack of local commercial opportunity (restaurants) - Perceptions of unreliable nature of local food - Consumer desire for consistency - Seasonality of local food - Most consumers unwilling to pay more for local food • Regulatory Challenges - Government regulations do not support small-scale local agriculture (e.g. egg & meat regulations) - Large amounts of paperwork for tax credits etc. - CRD & Island’s Trust regulations - Lack of proper production facilities • Other - Water - Population growth - Consumers need education re: local food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Fertile soil • Availability of land area • Geographical location close to major market of Victoria • Expendable income (retiree population) • Thriving Saturday market • Reputation (& associated marketing potential) • Tourists • Natureworks store • Cooking program at school • ALR tax credits • People (consciousness) • Diversity of experience • Local character • Cohesive community • History of farming • Local organizations (Island Farmer’s Institute, Island Natural Growers, 4-H club) • Previous research (Food Security report, produce report etc.) • High quality of local food • High commitment to organics • Desirability • Year-round economy • Opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservations with ‘re-establish” -Sounds as though agriculture doesn’t currently exist - Would prefer “<i>support, protect, enhance & encourage</i>” • Specify <i>local</i> agriculture as the priority • Define “priority” • Define “agriculture” as food-related. • How about targets? • All agree with goal in general.

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Non-agricultural farm uses- Aging farming population- Transient summer population- Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passion	
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 7: Facilitator’s Name - Kristina Bouris

Group Members’ Names: Di Sutterfield, Lois Sprague, Marion Hargrove, Kathy Weisner, Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Ken Strike, Gwyn Strike, Wendi Gilson, Ramona Scott, Margaret Thomson

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *land cost, livestock, bureaucratic mindset that bigger farms are better*
2. **Top 3 Assets (4):** *strong environmental interest, wealth of agricultural experience, benign climate, big demand for local products*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The group generally agreed. SSI could be the center of a resurgence of agriculture. There is the feeling that we have no choice, that our health and future depend on it, that it is important for our children. There is a concern that agriculture needs to be defined, the goal needs to be measurable, that it needs to trickle down to action, and that it may not be a desirable goal for the whole community.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land cost • Bureaucratic mindset that supports bigger farms as better • Water quality (too salty) • Competition with residential development • Urban/rural interface • Lack of cheap housing for farm labour • Government regulations that impact butchering, transportation etc of livestock • Lack of understanding and respect (shown though attitude and language) of ordinary people towards small farms • Lack of understanding of economics of small farms • Customers lack an understanding of the seasonal nature • Lack of understanding of organic methods • Retiring farmers = loss of expertise • Lack of support for new farmers (“not cool”, no status) • Lack of training for new farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a community • benign climate (normally!) • wealth of agricultural experience, there is always somebody to ask • well-educated and hard-working volunteers • strong food consciousness • strong, renowned cultural history of food and ag • people are adventurous consumers- people will try new things • more interest in organics • strong environmental interest • not many people like to eat at McD’s • good soil – in pockets only • available water there is enough that falls • there is still land available for agriculture on SSI • lots of backyard gardeners (increase total ag production) • agritourism, seasonal tourism • big demand for local products • schools are on-board (Fernwood Garden) • connection between local food and service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree: SSI could become a center of the agricultural resurgence. It is essential to rely less on imported foods and goods • AGREE: it is an easy goal for groups and individuals already supportive, but on a community-level, it is hard for tourism, transient community, etc. This goal is a good one for an active and viable segment of the community but maybe not realistic or desirable for all. • Agree: Over the next 20 years, there will be no choice but to re-establish agriculture (global warming, etc) • Agree: But needs to be more precise and measurable • Agree: a good goal, very good for children, good goal culturally and socially • Agree: but concern that the goal won’t trickle down to practical solutions. Needs to be implemented at all levels and not just stay on the flipchart. • Agree: Essential for survival. Agriculture needs to

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure is difficult • Undervaluing of food- it is too cheap • No regulations or legislation to allow parts of the ALR (or any land) to be leased with tenure- there is no protection, no long-term planning • Landowners letting others farm land do not want to lose control • Loss of equity when farmers lose access to land • Regulations and policy need to make room for all farm types • High cost of local products • Loss of high school agriculture program • Consumer buying habits- want “one-stop shopping”, everything in one store, advertising reinforces this • Markets: challenging to park, access is difficult for seniors due to long walk • No long term cold storage for local farmers/retails wishing to buy local products • Real estate agents have no appreciation for agriculture • Price of gas increases prices for farmers, for everyone at every level • No distribution system for local producers: retailer have to deal with individual farmers- no coordination • Water collection and retention is a challenge • No institutional buying policies 	<p>organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local restaurants, Nature Works want to feature local food • SSI is a brand (smoked salmon, coffee, tea, wine, lamb, tofu, cheese) • Difficulty in transportation and isolation is good thing for local food • Interest and promotion of genetic diversity – apples, poultry, seeds • Lots of willingness • GE free zone • Highest concentration of brainpower- educated/ intelligent people on the island • Wealthy segment of population, generous with sharing wealth • Awareness of global warming is good for local food • Community organization such as 4-H, farmers institute, grow-a-row, fall fair and many others. • 	<p>be defined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree: speaks to the connection between people and the soil. We need to provide the opportunity for building skills and experience. • Agree: “In sustainable agriculture is the preservation of the world”. We’re losing touch, we’re losing our health. Our species survival depends on sustainable agriculture. We need a common memory of healthy food. Need to add “environmental” to the goal.
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 8: Facilitator’s Name - Matt Thomson

Group Members’ Names: George Laundry; Ted Harrison; Tony Kennedy, Mike Larmour, George Ehring, Cam Robinson, Vera Robinson, Ron Pither, Julia Grace, Mataji Ishaya, Jim Lemaistre.

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *operating costs exceed profits; farming demands lots of infrastructure (e.g. transportation, abattoirs, processing facilities etc.); taxation is too high; government subsidies and incentives don't benefit small farms*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *climate; SSI is organic capital of Canada; community concern for each other; Islands Trust Act; best food in the world!*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *This goal represents an important element in maintaining balance, both within communities and with nature. Our group felt some concerns regarding both the urgency in making this a reality and the feasibility of implementing this goal.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult to make a profit • cost of land • operating costs exceed profits • difficult to make commercial agriculture viable • making agriculture support/help support households financially • lots of infrastructure demands • big business influences government • younger generation will likely not inherit farms • our assets may not provide opportunities <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we are part of the problem with buying choices • not training all age groups and sectors • issues with farm tenure • problems with capital costs, operating costs, energy costs • high input/low output and low quality • food in store doesn't reflect cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on farming resources from 30 years ago (available from Mike Larmour) • climate • being an island • knowing your market • huge amount of investment capital available (to take advantage of visible, ethical investments) • community concern for each other • SSI is organic capital of Canada (specialized products available and desirable) • Thrifty's buys local • Natureworks buys local • community is gather (e.g. Today) • Islands Trust/Islands Trust Act (to preserve and protect) • upcoming OCP review • best food in the world available • people are prepared to pay more for quality food • diversity of food products • diversity of interested groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture keeps connection to the earth • even 1st three words would be enough • agriculture (as a social cultural and economic priority) preserves a balance with communities and natural systems • this promotes being proactive in inter-generational continuity of farming • important to pursue this goal (for many reasons, e.g. Food security, preservation of greenspace) • emotional reactions: some see the primary goal as establishing gov't process that truly represents us; without this we may not succeed in implementing this goal • optimism and enthusiasm vs. a fear that we are close to an ecological tipping point

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• government regulations• inter-generational transfer (legal, regulatory, policy framework limitations)• no collective educational resources <p>Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pastures and watersheds overlapping• use of pesticides/GMOs <p>Government Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• taxes• regulations built for agri-business• incentives/subsidies that don't benefit small farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• water on the south end• multiple microclimates (e.g. Hot on the north end)• the Island's growers (lots relative to size)• Agricultural Land Reserve• Fall Fair	
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 9: Facilitator’s Name - Tamsin Mills

Group Members’ Names: Liz Armour, Jim Scott, Jane Squier, Jim Maurice, JoAnn Tymchuk, Mark Whitear, Rob Weeden, Roger Middleton, Gay Alkoff, Marcel Kauer

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Economic viability, Water demand and availability, Lack of cooperation among farmers*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *People, Island life, Organizations (see below for expanded bullets)*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *General agreement with the goal of the process. We would like to replace the historical reference represented by “re-establish agriculture” to the phrase “establish new agriculture”. This change represents the idea of making agriculture work within the constraints and realities of today while realistically looking toward the future. We believe this goal drives a timely process, one that will lay the groundwork for the future by organizing community cooperation focused on agriculture and stressing the importance of focusing locally when it comes to food. The goal is imperative for the health and survival of the community in the long term.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Viability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expensive labour ○ Expensive feed / fuel ○ Increased costs / decreased revenue ○ Low equivalent income (\$1/hr) • Water Availability and demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Future costs and sources • Lack of cooperation among farmers • Lack of facilities for processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ i.e. Livestock industry • Land away from agriculture for development • Unavailability of land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenge of sharing land • Lack of education in following areas: (especially children and youth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food preservation ○ Why buy local ○ Growing own food ○ Food system ○ Trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local knowledge ○ Local support ○ Local Participation ○ Willing population • Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small scale ○ Finite ○ Keep out GMOs ○ Less available discount foods • Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4H ○ TLC ○ NGOs ○ Natural Growers ○ Farmers Institute • Good climate • Variety of microclimates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allow for staggering crops • SSI Monetary Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of “re-establish agriculture” use “establish new agriculture” The idea of “new agriculture” replacing the historical reference and embodying how different the situation in which we farm today is from that in the past. Constraints today relative to when farming was established on Saltspring include expensive land and labour, specialization in farming activities and a compromised natural resource base. • Need to shift to focus locally • Timely goal as agriculture is vital for sustainability and survival of the human race • People need to grow their own food • Need for infrastructure to support farmers • Farmers must have food system organized and be organized themselves as people will look to them in coming times of crisis • This goal won’t essentially be realized until the pressure from the unsustainable course that humans are charting is felt in time of crisis • Need to add “on Saltspring Island” at the end of

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of education on how to make small parcels productive • Challenge to be prepared for eventual breakdown in food system • Unaffordable to employ labourers • Housing too expensive and none available for labourers • Access to local experts • Government policy • To grow a product acceptable to urban consumers (quality, taste) • To maintain consistent supply for retailers • Lack of local support from retailers • Deterioration of relationship between farmers and retailers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lack of knowledge and educational opportunities for retailers • Communications between restaurants/retail and farms • Return on farming is so low people doing it on the sidelines • Constraints on using forestry to bolster farm income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Important income source to make farm work ◦ Tax policy challenge here • Lack of complimentary currency to help debt load and young farmers • Cannot lease part of a parcel of land • Barriers to independent community decision-making • Incentive for stewardship • Corporate versus community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Laws don't favour local food production • Lack of government support by extension workers • Quotas on egg production • Public apathy • Lack of skills in community • Multiple negative externalities of aquaculture • Garden club not officially here <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They have ability share knowledge on backyard food production • Challenge when urban and farm exist next to each other in terms of pollution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Widespread use of homeowner pesticides and household chemicals which affect farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI Seed Foundation • Diversity of farming due to diversity of soil conditions • Simple lifestyle attracts likeminded such as WWOOFers • Great place to live • SSI Name Brand / marketing • There is support for local food distribution • Lots of rain = possibility of rain water storage • Relatively undamaged natural environment • Dan Jason Seed Company • Tuesday and Saturday Markets • Farm Gate sales • Fall Fair – challenges people to grow food and educates • Local restaurants use local product <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Tourists have brand recognition • High ratio of land relative to population 	<p>the goal phrase</p>
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health of watershed• Some soils not suited to agriculture• Intergenerational gap<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Challenge of intergenerational transfer of farms due to low economic viability of farms and high land prices (these are the people with expertise)○ Demographic shift - many farmers retiring or retired who will be next farmers?• Isolation of island• Large (unmanaged) deer population and the need for better fencing• Climate change<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lack of widespread education or understanding		
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